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ROMNEY, MENINO ANNOUNCE NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Spur Development of the Former Boston State Hospital

Demonstrating their commitment to increasing the supply of housing, Governor Mitt Romney and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino today kicked off the construction of 99 new homes on 18 acres of the former Boston State Hospital site in Dorchester.

“The Boston State Hospital project is a model of our smart growth strategy for future development of thousands of acres of state surplus land across the Commonwealth,” said Romney. “Building more affordable housing like this project is one of the key elements necessary to jumpstart the Massachusetts economy.”

Romney and Menino said the project – known as Harvard Commons – will include three phases of work by Cruz Development Corporation of Boston. The first phase will provide 45 units of affordable, limited equity cooperative housing, with apartments available to those whose annual income are at or below 60 percent of the median income for Boston. Some units will also be set aside for homeless families and clients of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. The second and third phases of the project will consist of 54 three and four bedroom single-family homes.

“Everybody needs a safe, secure, and affordable place to call home. But we all know that decent housing is hard to find, and hard to afford. That’s why Harvard Commons is so important,” said Menino. “This development will give people the kind of homes they need and deserve. And we will continue to work hard to make sure that housing is available not just in Dorchester, but in every neighborhood in Boston.”

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The new housing units are a natural complement to the redevelopment efforts that have already taken root at the former Department of Mental Health Facility.

The Massachusetts Audubon Society has completed construction of a wildlife sanctuary and nature center that occupies more than 60 acres of the former hospital. The state-owned Massachusetts Biologics Laboratory facility has recently broken ground on a new vaccine production facility on the hospital grounds and the City of Boston has reserved up to 20 acres of the site for a new high school planned to serve the area.

The Division of Capital Asset Management, the state agency overseeing the redevelopment efforts, has also received development proposals on the remaining 40-acre portion of the site where possible uses include additional housing and commercial and institutional activities. These proposals are currently under review with a decision expected within the next several weeks in consultation with the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the local Citizens Advisory Committee.

The state has invested more than \$27 million over the last 10 years to prepare the former hospital for redevelopment. These efforts include demolition of 900,000 square feet of antiquated buildings unsuitable for reuse, while completing a number of environmental projects. Work by Cruz Development will formally begin this summer.

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